BURIED deep in the report on domestic activities conducted by the Central Intelligence Agency, published last week by a special commission headed by Vice-president Rockefeller, is an account of an extraordinary and "clearly illegal" programme carried out by the agency's Directorate of Science and Technology. It involved giving psychotropic drugs, such as LSD, to unsuspecting people as part of an effort "to counter the use of behaviour-influencing drugs clandestinely administered by an enemy."

At least one person who was fed LSD without his knowledge "developed serious side effects" and later jumped to his death from a tenth floor hospital window. And there were also several cases in which victims became ill for hours or days after unknowingly taking the CIA's drugs.

The drug testing programme, the Rockefeller report says, "was part of a much larger CIA programme to study possible means for controlling human behaviour. Other studies explored the effects of radiation, electric-shock, psychology, psychiatry, sociology and harassment substances".

The full extent of the programme is not known, however, because all the records were destroyed in 1973, "including a total of 152 files", the report states. Moreover, CIA officials concerned with the programme couldn't be interviewed by the Rockefeller Commission because they were either dead or out of the country. Those officials, according to one news account, include the former head of the CIA's Directorate of Science and Technology, who left the United States in 1973 and is now living abroad.

The CIA's interest in the use of drugs in intelligence operations first surfaced in the late 1940s, prompted by reports that the Soviet Union was experimenting with behaviour-inducing drugs and by speculation that confessions introduced in trials in the Soviet Union had been obtained by the use of drugs. But testing did not begin until 1953, the report states.

First, a few tests with LSD were run on volunteers, but in 1955, "tests were begun on unsuspecting subjects in normal social conditions". Testing began on the West Coast, and a similar programme was started on the East Coast in 1961.

The report goes on to note that administration of dangerous substances to unsuspecting people was halted in 1963, and all drug testing was then carried out on volunteers, chiefly prisoners. The entire operation was finally terminated in 1967.

The incident which resulted in a victim throwing himself out of a hos-

pital window took place in 1953. "LSD was administered to an employee of the Department of the Army without his knowledge while he was attending a meeting with CIA personnel working on the drug project", the report states. Although he had participated in discussions "where the testing of drugs on unsuspecting people had been agreed to in principle . . . this individual was not made aware that he had been given LSD until about 20 minutes after it had been administered".

Washington seen

by Colin Norman, Washington

The two CIA employees responsible for the incident were merely reprimanded by the CIA Director, the report states, which indicates that the drug programme was at least brought to the attention of the agency's top brass.

The Rockefeller Commission also notes that the CIA Directorate of Science and Technology develops equipment for monitoring conversations, and the report reveals that such equipment has been tested in the United States by clandestine monitoring of private conversations. Some conversations were recorded, the report states, "but the recordings were kept only until the testing was concluded". The Commission recommends that "testing of equipment for monitoring conversations should not involve unsuspecting persons living within the United States".

● According to two briefings given by Vice-president Nelson Rockefeller to Congressional committees last week, the science policy office which President Ford wants to establish in the White House (see *Nature*, 255, 438; 1975) will have broad responsibilities, and it will closely resemble the Office of Science and Technology (OST), which President Nixon scrapped in 1973.

Most important, Rockefeller informed Senator Kennedy's NSF subcommittee and the House Committee on Science and Technology that the proposed office will be expected to advise the President on military research and development. That responsibility was specifically excluded from

the functions assigned to Dr Guyford Stever, the Director of the National Science Foundation, when Nixon conferred upon him the title of Science Adviser in 1973, following the destruction of OST. The lack of influential outside scientific scrutiny of the Defense Department's programmes is regarded as a major deficiency in the present science policy apparatus.

According to Rockefeller, the office—which would bear the title of the Office of Science and Technology Policy—would consist of up to 15 people, headed by a director and a deputy director, and it would be equipped with a budget of about \$1.5 million a year. By comparison, the old OST had a staff of about 25 and a budget of about \$2 million, while the science advisory apparatus now operating in the National Science Foundation has a budget of about \$6 million.

Asked in an interview last week what would become of NSF's policy apparatus when the advisory functions are shifted back to the White House, Stever said that he expects NSF to retain a small office, chiefly for longer-term analyses, to assist the White House.

Noting the similarity between the proposed White House office and the old OST, Stever said that there is nothing inherently wrong with the structure, but it just didn't work well in the Nixon White House. The Ford Administration, he suggested, has shown more interest in science advice and there is no reason why the arrangement could not be made to work.

● The National Academy of Sciences has been asked to undertake a thorough review of the role that nuclear power should play in long-term energy supply in the United States. The study, which will be carried out for the Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA), will be announced when the contract is signed and a committee is appointed. Although it will take up to two years to complete, the study could play an important role in the Congressional debate on ERDA's budget, which is expected to take place in the next few weeks.

An important part of the study will be an assessment of the need for a fast breeder reactor in the United States, and Congressional opponents of the breeder programme are expected to attempt to remove some funds for the programme from ERDA's budget until the Academy's verdict is in. Although there has recently been an increase in opposition to nuclear power among members of Congress, the strength of that opposition has yet to be tested in a vote. This year's debate on the ERDA budget could provide just such a test.